REP. BECERRA: WE HAVE A JOBS DEFICIT AND REPUBLICANS BLAME HARD-HIT AMERICANS

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WASHINGTON, D.C.—Today the House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee will markup legislation (H.R. 1745) that would eliminate federal payments for temporary extended unemployment insurance. If this bill becomes law, over four million Americans will lose their extended benefits in early July unless States provide coverage for them. Representative Xavier Becerra (CA-31), Vice Chair of the House Democratic Caucus and Ranking Member of the Social Security Subcommittee, released the following statement in anticipation of this Republican move to slash benefits for hard-hit American workers:

“In the wake of the Bush recession, President Obama made some tough decisions which have now produced two million private sector jobs in the last fourteen months. Rather than build upon the economic success of the President and his economic recovery laws, Congressional Republicans are blaming hard-hit Americans for not being able to find a job quickly enough, and they are cutting the hard-earned insurance benefits of these Americans.

Weighing down our economy and job market is a mountain of debt and deficit, primarily caused by tax cuts for the rich and the unfunded wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. If the new majority were serious about putting Americans back to work and responsibly reducing the deficit, they would hold accountable those who caused this economic mess instead of punishing American workers who have suffered because of it.

Republicans seem to have a razor-thin memory. Just in December 2010, five months ago, they reached a legislative compromise with President Obama on benefits for jobless Americans. Now they want to renege on that agreement just when the President’s initiatives are putting a growing number of Americans back to work.”

H.R. 1745 would eliminate Federal payments for temporary extended unemployment benefits on July 6. As a result, over 4 million Americans—including 600,000 Californians—could lose their extended benefits in early July unless States provide coverage for them.

The so-called “JOBS” bill would transfer to the States money now dedicated to providing extended unemployment benefits ($31 billion) and allow the States to use it for other purposes, including paying off unemployment insurance loans from the Federal government, providing tax cuts to businesses, and/or backfilling State or Federal budget cuts to employment-related services.

By ending the current Federal guarantee for extended jobless benefits, H.R. 1745 would push even more States to slash their safety nets.